

# JEWELLED IRON CROSSES FROM CONFEDERATE WARSHIP VIRGINIA

Badge of Honor Presented by  
Times-Dispatch to Oldest  
Confederate Soldier.

GOES TO WILLIAM CORBIN

Lives in Culpeper County, and  
Is Ninety-four Years Old  
To-Day.

In July last the Times-Dispatch came in possession of some of the iron with which the Confederate battle ship "Virginia" formerly called the Merrimack, was armed, and conceived the idea of having the same made into two souvenirs, one to be worn by the youngest Confederate soldier living in Virginia and the other by the oldest. The souvenirs are iron crosses, heavily jeweled.

In order to find the youngest and the oldest veteran the Confederate Column of this paper was opened to all the "baby soldiers" and all of the "old boys" to answer roll call.

The contest brought letters from all over the State and many from beyond the borders of Virginia, and as all of them were of a personal reminiscence character they made some of the most interesting war history that has ever appeared in the Confederate Column.

Not only this, but the letters brought many old soldier friends in touch with each other again. Friendships that were formed in the dark days of camp, on the march and on the battlefield were renewed through this column and the information it furnished, and in many instances comrades who were supposed to be dead or who had been lost over the river were located as being yet in the land of the living.

These letters were published Sunday after Sunday in the Confederate Column from the latter part of July until the first of December, and taken altogether, they made as interesting chapters of war history as ever were written.

The Oldest and the Youngest.

After going over all the letters and papers filed in the most interesting contest, it has been found that William Corbin, of Winston, Culpeper county, is the oldest Confederate soldier living in Virginia, and to the grand old veteran goes the first iron and jeweled cross.

Mr. Corbin is to-day ninety-four years of age, and it is something of a coincidence that his 94th birthday is the 20th of January, to-day, the day which was set apart for the awarding of the cross. Thus it happened that the cross will go to him as a kind of birthday present as well as a badge of honor as the oldest living Confederate soldier.

The cross for the youngest soldier is awarded to Mr. William F. Hopkins, who is a native of York county, being an overgrown boy he had the weight, the muscle and the endurance necessary to enable him to go right into the thickest of the fight when the first light commenced in 1861, and at the tender age of 11 years five months and 17 days, Mr. Hopkins now lives in the city of Richmond, and is as healthy and as jovial and almost as fat as when he was when he entered the Confederate army as a baby boy, and much fatter than when he came out of the service at Appomattox at the age of 15.

For both the "oldest" and the "youngest" prize there were many other very worthy contestants, and some of them missed the crosses by only a hair's breadth.

No apology is made for taking up all the space of the Confederate Column this morning with sketches and pictures of a number of these contestants.

## OLDEST CONFEDERATE.

William Corbin, of Culpeper County, Will Wear Iron Cross.

The oldest Confederate soldier now living in the State of Virginia, and the one, who as such is awarded the jeweled iron cross, made from the material of the battleship Virginia (Merrimack), is William Corbin, of Winston, Culpeper county, Va. The old gentleman is now hale and hearty at the advanced age of 94, this very day (January 20) being the ninety-fourth anniversary of his birth.

The following letter was published in the Times-Dispatch, October 13, last, and marked Mr. Corbin's entrance in the contest for the cross:

"One of the Oldest.

Editor of the Times-Dispatch:—Gentlemen—A friend of mine has advised me that you are trying to find the oldest living Confederate soldier, and I have concluded to send you my record as to age and service. I was born on the 20th day of January, 1812, and volunteered in the Confederate service on the last of February or the first of March, 1862, and served the rest of the war; enlisted in the Tenth Regiment Volunteers, Infantry, Captain Richard Parks commanding, I am now nearly ninety-four years old, and can get about fairly well; can walk several miles a day; health good; and will add that I am still as good a Confederate as in 1862.

Yours truly,  
WILLIAM CORBIN.  
Another letter received from the old soldier a few days ago, enclosed at our request, a photograph from which his picture here published was made, being the information that he is feeling splendidly, enjoying good health, and is devoting all of his time nursing a little sixteen months old orphan boy which he has adopted. He has been engaged in this interesting job ever since the little fellow was three months old. The old gentleman says: "I hope God may spare me long enough to see this little man able to take care of himself." What a glorious way for the oldest Confederate soldier to spend his last years.

The next oldest Confederate soldier the Times-Dispatch's contest has been able to bring out is C. M. Colley, of Albemarle, Washington county.

He was born November 12th, 1812. He entered the army as a stock purchasing agent in 1861, and in one way and another served the State of Virginia and the Southern Confederacy until the end in 1865. The venerable Mr. Colley is ten months younger than Mr. Corbin, and therefore comes in as "second best" in the contest for the cross for the oldest living veteran.

The first information that came to the Times-Dispatch concerning Mr. Colley was a letter from his son, who is a Commissioner of the Revenue in Washington county, and who was also, together with another son of the oldest vet, a Confederate soldier. This letter, which gave the simple story of the service of these three, and entered the old gentleman as a contestant, was printed in this paper October 11th.

This was such an interesting case of father and two sons fighting side by side, further information was sought, and on the 21st of October there was in the Confederate Column a group picture showing the aged veteran, his two veteran sons, a grandson and a little baby boy who was a great-grandson. With this pic-

ture the following interesting story was published:

## BRAVE OLD SOLDIERS THE COLLEY FAMILY

Father and Two Sons Who  
Fought for South Living at  
Advanced Ages.

Last week, in the department devoted to the jeweled cross contest, was published a letter from Mr. Thomas W. Colley, who is now a Commissioner of the Revenue in Washington county, and who was a member of Company D, First Virginia Cavalry. A part of the letter read as follows:

"My father, C. M. Colley, who was born on the 12th day of November, 1812, is yet living. He was wagon-master of the Forty-fifth Virginia Infantry, under General John B. Floyd, in the State Line service, until it was taken from the State service and mustered into the regular Confederate service. From that time until the end of the war he was purchasing agent for the Confederate government. He bought horses and mules in Southwest Virginia and East Tennessee, and had some thrilling adventures in Tennessee among the 'truly loyal,' dodging the 'bushwhackers,' etc."

"I was born on the 20th day of November, 1837, and volunteered on the 7th day of April, 1861, in the Washington Mounted Rifles, under Captain W. E. Jones, afterwards General W. E. Jones. We were attached to the First Regiment, Virginia Cavalry, about the 1st of June, 1861, at Winchester, Va. General J. E. B. Stuart, the prince of cavalymen, was our first colonel. I served with this regiment until I was wounded at Hays Shop, on the 28th of May, 1864, losing my left foot."

"My brother, W. L. Colley, was born in the year 1839. He entered the service in 1861. He was with my father in the State Line service until the spring of 1861, when he joined Company D, First Virginia Cavalry, and served to the end of the war. He was twice wounded."

"We are all three still in the land of the living."

We to-day present a group picture of this remarkable family of Confederate fighters. The Colleys in the picture are the three Confederate soldiers mentioned above—C. M. Colley, aged 94; Thomas W. Colley, aged 69; and W. L. Colley, aged 67, the young man is Fitzhugh Lee Colley, son of Thomas W. Colley, who died a year ago, aged 28, and the little baby in the chair is Robert Lee Colley, son of Fitzhugh and great-grandson of the aged veteran, who is now only 93 years of age. The little baby died in March last, aged 3 years.

Is there another such Confederate family in the State?

Mr. Daniel T. Colley, of No. 215 South Cherry Street, this city, is a son of Thomas W. Colley.

Sketches of other aged veterans who entered the contest are here reproduced as they originally appeared in the Confederate Column while the contest was on:

Ninety-One in March.

Editor of the Times-Dispatch:—Sir—I have been reading the letters of the old and young Confederates in your valuable paper, and wish to enter my name in the list as the oldest Confederate soldier in the service.

I was born in Richmond March 3, 1815, which makes me ninety-one years old last March. I enlisted in the Thirty-first Battalion, Virginia Cavalry, under Captain William McGruder, and was detailed as expert horseman at Navy Hill, and served under Major Wren at Monroe Park in 1862. I was paroled at Washington, Ga., with Major Maynard, and went from there to Mobile; then to New Orleans, New York, and back to Richmond. I now live in this city, and would be glad to see any of my old Confederate friends.

Very truly yours,  
JOS. C. ("Uncle Joe") HALEY.  
132 North Twentieth Street, Richmond, Va., October, 1906.

Spry at Eighty-Two.

Editor of the Times-Dispatch:—Sir—I have been reading with a great deal of interest the letters from the "old boys" published in the Times-Dispatch in the friendly contest for the jeweled cross to go to the youngest and oldest Confederate soldiers. I am eighty-two years old, and if I live to see the 11th day of next June I will be eighty-two, having been born June 11, 1825. I served in the Confederate army from the 7th of July, 1861, until the surrender of General Lee, on the 9th of April, 1865.

Yours truly,  
ALLEN J. CARTER.  
Mt. Carmel post-office, Halifax county, Va., October 2, 1906.

One of the Old Boys.

Editor of the Times-Dispatch:—Sir—I notice in your paper that you wish to know who is the youngest and oldest living Confederate soldier. I was born on the 14th of February, 1825; enlisted on the 2d of August, 1861, in the Fifty-eighth Virginia Regiment, Company B; was captured on the 2d of April, 1865, at Petersburg. I was in the following engagements: Hatcher's Run, Fredericksburg, Winchester, Gaines Mill, Spotsylvania Courthouse, Cedar Run, Cheat Mountain, the Wilderness, Fisher's Hill and the Second Battle of Manassas.

Respectfully,  
NATHANIEL NEIGHBOURS.  
Salts, Va., September 8, 1906.

Is Nearly Seventy-Five.

Editor of the Times-Dispatch:—Sir—After reading you would like to know the names of the oldest and youngest Confederate soldier in the State. I was born in Madison county, Va., November 14, 1831, which makes me seventy-five years old the 14th of November, 1906. I enlisted as a soldier in Company H, Seventh Virginia Infantry, May 3, 1861. I stood with that regiment through the war in all the principal battles that regiment was in; was captured by our enemy April 1, 1865; taken to Point Lookout and remained there until the 11th day of June, 1865.

I am very respectfully yours,  
JOHN W. CLAYTON.  
Greenwood Depot, Albemarle county, Virginia.

Up to Ninety.

Editor of the Times-Dispatch:—Sir—In answer to inquiries as to the oldest veteran at the Soldiers Home, I wish to state that I was ninety years old last June, and I am, according to the register, the oldest veteran at this place.

Yours truly,  
W. A. GILMAN.  
Lee Camp Soldiers Home.

Is Now Nearly Ninety.

Hampton, Va., August 10, 1906.  
Editor of the Times-Dispatch:—Sir—In answer to your request for the names of the oldest and youngest living Confederate soldiers, I send the name of "Col." E. E. Savage, one of Hampton's oldest citizens. He was born in Hampton, Va., March 1, 1817, enlisted in



GROUP OF OLDEST LIVING CONFEDERATE SOLDIERS.  
William Corbin, in the centre, is ninety-four years old to-day, and being the very oldest, wins the jeweled iron cross.

the Washington Artillery, a Hampton company, April 27, 1861. The first of next March he will be 90 years old.

Mr. Hopkins is a member of Magruder Camp, Confederate Veterans, at Newport News.

Yours very truly,  
H. CLAY REES.

Alexander Davis.

Mr. Alexander Davis, who now resides in Rixeyville, Va., but spends considerable time in Washington City, is 87 years of age.

When the war broke out he was a miller in Loudoun county. He wanted to enlist, but at that time the government needed mills quite as much as it did soldiers, and Mr. Davis was not only exempt from service by law, but he was required by special order to remain at home and run the mill. However, in 1862 the Yankees came along and burned the mill down, and then Mr. Davis joined Company F, of Mosby's Battalion, and fought in that command to the end of the war.

Mr. J. R. Behn, of Rixeyville, entered Mr. Davis in the contest, with the following sketch of his neighbor:

THE AGED MILLER.  
Editor of the Times-Dispatch:—Sir—You ask for the oldest and youngest Confederate soldier. Mr. Alexander Davis, who lives near here, has a claim. Whether he is the oldest or not remains to be seen. He was born in Loudoun county June 19, 1819. At the commencement of hostilities he was running a mill at Rapidan Station. As a miller he was exempt until the mill was burned. He then joined Mosby's command, the Forty-seventh Battalion of Virginia Cavalry, and served until the close. He came home, and has been a true old Virginia gentleman ever since, and now, in his eighty-eighth year, is still as true as steel.

Mr. Davis's grandfather was a soldier of the Revolution, and went through the Seven Years' War, and was at Yorktown at the surrender of Lord Cornwallis. Let us hear from the old man.

Very truly yours,  
J. B. BOHIN.  
Rixeyville, Va., 1906.

YOUNGEST CONFEDERATE.

William F. Hopkins, Formerly of York Co., Wins the Cross.

Mr. William F. Hopkins, who now lives in Richmond and is hale and hearty and heavy of body, is the youngest of the young men who have won the jeweled cross that goes to the youngest living Confederate soldier. He was a full-fledged fighter at the age of 11 years and a few months, and fought the

whole war through, his career ending at Appomattox when he was just fifteen years of age.

Mr. Hopkins is a member of Magruder Camp, Confederate Veterans, at Newport News.

His brief letter entering the contest was published in the Confederate Column August 12th. It was as follows:

A Very Young One.

Editor of the Times-Dispatch:—Sir—Referring to your inquiry as to the oldest and youngest Confederate soldier: I was born the 13th day of November, 1849, in York county, eight miles below Yorktown, entered the Confederate service when I was eleven years five months and seventeen days old with York Rangers at the beginning, afterwards Company I, Thirty-second Vir-

ginia Regiment, in Hunton's brigade until after the fight at Gettysburg; then in General Corcoran's brigade. Served during the entire war; paroled at Appomattox Courthouse, at which time I was fifteen years old, and weighed over two hundred pounds. Now, at the age of fifty-six, I weigh two hundred and sixty-five pounds.

Dr. M. W. Jewett, of Ivanhoe, Va., was the youngest of the young men who won the jeweled cross that goes to the youngest living Confederate soldier. He was a full-fledged fighter at the age of 11 years and a few months, and fought the

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Yours very truly,  
W. P. STANSBURY.  
Brook Road, Henrico county.  
P. S.—I am a member of Pickett's Camp, Confederate Veterans, at present.

Not Quite Fifteen.

Editor of the Times-Dispatch:—Sir, I was born in the city of Richmond, Va., on the 23d day of July 1848; enlisted in Company "D," First Regiment Virginia Infantry, on the 21st day of April, 1861. I remained with regiment until February or March, 1862, was honorably discharged, and re-enlisted about May 14, 1862, in Crenshaw Battery, which afterwards was one of the batteries forming the famous Pegram's Battalion, Third Corps, A. N. V., and served until the close of the war. Was engaged in nearly all of the principal battles of the A. N. V.

For confirmation of above statement, I refer to Charles T. Loefer, Company "D," First Regiment Virginia Volunteers (Infantry); Captain Thomas Ellett, Crenshaw Battery, Pegram's Battalion of Artillery.

Yours very truly,  
E. S. FERNYHOUGH,  
Deputy City Sergeant.  
Residence, No. 109 North Harvey Street.

Went In to Fight.

Editor of the Times-Dispatch:—Sir, I note in last Sunday's paper you are making inquiry as to "who is the oldest and who is the youngest Confederate enlisting in Virginia and now living in this State," and to whom you wish to present a jeweled cross of honor. You say, "Now, veterans, answer to your names." Which I will not proceed to do. Permit me to say in the beginning, if you are looking for a young kettledrum-beater or a bomb-proof soldier, then I am not an applicant. But if you are looking for the boys who served with a musket in the first line, then I wish to compete. To begin, I enlisted in the Farmville Guard, Company F, Eighteenth Virginia Regiment, while in camp at Fairfax Courthouse, about the middle of August, 1861. I was at that time sixteen years old and weighed only 86 pounds. Yet I carried my musket on every march and did picket duty all winter, and made the march from Manassas to Yorktown to meet McClellan; was under fire daily at Yorktown; my first real fight being on the 5th day of May at Williamsburg. Then the Seven Days' fight around Richmond; next, Second Manassas; then Boonsboro, Md.; next, Sharpsburg; then Fredericksburg; next, campaign in North Carolina; then in Pickens' charge at Gettysburg. Here I was wounded and captured; made my escape from Point Lookout, Md., in December in time to go in the second campaign in North Carolina with General Pickens. Returning to Virginia, was in the fight on the 16th day of May, between Richmond and Petersburg, and again in battle at Hanover Junction; then Second Cold Harbor; then again between Richmond and Petersburg on the 16th day of June, when we drove Butler back to the river at Bermuda front, at which time we remained until March, 1865. When we left this line we marched to the right of Petersburg and made the fight at Hatcher's Run on the 31st day of March, when our lines were broken and we began the retreat to Appomattox. We were then retreating, we were under fire very many times before reaching Sailor Creek, on the 6th of April. Here I was again wounded, and so badly shot that I laid on the field twenty-one days. Here ended my duties with "Marse Rob," who surrendered three days later. I

Yours truly,  
M. W. JEWETT.

Ivanhoe, Va.

Others of the "baby soldiers" who were interesting exhibits in entering the contest, some of which follow:

Goochland Veteran.

Hanover, August 6, 1906.  
Editor of the Times-Dispatch:—Sir—Having seen under your editorial head a request to ascertain as to the youngest and oldest soldier now living in Virginia, wishing to present to those that may be entitled thereto a cross made from a portion of the famous iron clad "Virginia," I was born May 19, 1849. Enlisted in Confederate army January 15, 1864, Company G, Seventeenth Virginia Infantry, Corcoran's Brigade, Pickett's Division.

P. H. TOLER.  
Oiltville P. O., Goochland Co., Va.

Fought from Start.

Editor of the Times-Dispatch:—Sir—Answering your query of last Sunday, according to service, age, etc., of Confederate veterans, would like to state that I was born March 7, 1848; enlisted February, 1862; served throughout war under Captain Thom P. Wilkerson, Lieutenant John W. Turner, Company "C," heavy artillery. I was transferred to Company "I," "Danville Dra-

gon," Captain B. Green, Colonel T. L. Rouser, Fifth Regiment of Cavalry, did actual service from beginning to end, which my record will show. I enlisted at the age of thirteen years and eleven months, and was mustered in at Jamestown Island.

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